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**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**  
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)

## ***Central African Republic – Complex Emergency***

Situation Report #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2007

March 1, 2007

### **BACKGROUND**

Increasing violence between the Central African Republic Government (CARG) and armed opposition groups, as well as insecurity attributed to Chadian and Sudanese opposition forces and widespread banditry, have displaced an estimated 220,000 people, including 150,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern CAR and 66,000 refugees in Chad and Cameroon. The 2003 military coup that brought current president Francis Bozizé to power resulted in extensive displacement and damage to infrastructure across the north. Recent violence has exacerbated existing vulnerabilities in the most-affected prefectures of Ouham, Ouham-Pendé, Gribingui, Haute-Kotto, Vakaga, and Bamingui-Bangoran. However, the impact of insecurity in the region is not homogenous, ranging from normalcy in many areas to the razing of villages and displacement in others. On February 2, CARG and two main armed opposition groups signed a peace accord calling for an immediate ceasefire and the integration of opposition groups into the national army. While the accord represents a significant development, improved security will ultimately depend on implementation of the accord and the inclusion of remaining opposition groups in the peace process.

On January 31, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires A. James Panos declared a disaster in response to the increasing humanitarian needs in the county and requested assistance from USAID/OFDA. In FY 2007, USAID has provided more than \$5.7 million in humanitarian assistance to support agriculture and food security, coordination, food assistance, and water, sanitation, and hygiene programming.

<b>NUMBERS AT A GLANCE</b>		<b>SOURCE</b>
<b>IDPs</b>	150,000	OCHA <sup>1</sup> - November 2006
<b>CAR Refugees</b>	In Chad: 46,000 In Cameroon: 20,000	UNHCR <sup>2</sup> - February 2006
<b>Total Affected Population</b>	1 million	OCHA - November 2006

### **FY 2007 HUMANITARIAN FUNDING PROVIDED TO DATE**

<b>USAID/OFDA Assistance to CAR.....</b>	<b>\$1,551,891</b>
<b>USAID/FFP<sup>3</sup> Assistance to CAR .....</b>	<b>\$4,196,500</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID Humanitarian Assistance to CAR.....</b>	<b>\$5,748,391</b>

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

#### ***USAID Assessment Team Visit***

Between January 28 and February 10, a five-member USAID assessment team conducted an assessment of humanitarian conditions in northern CAR with a focus on IDPs affected by recent conflict. The team highlighted the need for a more robust humanitarian response, including the provision of emergency relief supplies, food security and agriculture interventions, improved access to water and sanitation facilities, enhanced humanitarian coordination, and increased protection through an expanded U.N. presence in affected areas.

#### ***Displaced Populations***

As a result of escalating attacks by armed opposition groups and counter-insurgency measures by CARG, OCHA reports that the number of IDPs has tripled from 50,000 in April 2006 to an estimated 150,000.

Most displaced communities abandoned their homes and fled to forests or agricultural areas within a 10 km radius of their villages. Despite limited access to food, clean water, or health care, local coping mechanisms are strong, and humanitarian indicators are generally below emergency levels. However, according to relief agencies, emergency relief supplies and plastic sheeting are required as most IDPs fled without household items or supplies.

In response to identified needs, a USAID/OFDA airlift delivered emergency relief supplies, including blankets, plastic sheeting, and water containers valued at more than \$175,000, to Bangui on February 16. The U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF) is distributing the relief commodities to assist 20,000 IDPs in affected northern prefectures. In addition, USAID/OFDA continues to

<sup>1</sup> U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

<sup>2</sup> Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees

<sup>3</sup> USAID’s Office of Food for Peace

work closely with partners to monitor conditions and to augment programs. The Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM) supports ongoing protection and IDP assistance programs in northern CAR through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

### ***Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene***

An extensive system of hand-pumped wells exists throughout Ouham and Ouham Pendé prefectures. Security permitting, displaced populations are able to return to their villages and access water pumps, according to the USAID assessment team. However, due to a lack of access to spare parts, many wells are currently under-producing or are inoperable. To ensure access to clean water, USAID/OFDA is supporting the rehabilitation of water sources through implementing partner International Partnership for Human Development (IPHD).

### ***Food Security and Agriculture***

Insecurity prevented many subsistence farmers from planting or harvesting crops during the last agricultural season, and the ongoing destruction of seed stocks and tools threatens production in 2007. According to the USAID assessment team, distribution of agricultural inputs prior to the April planting season is critical if affected communities are to benefit from the upcoming agricultural season. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is currently providing vegetable seeds to vulnerable households in Markoundia, Ouham Prefecture and assessing procurement options for expanded agricultural interventions in the region. In FY 2007, USAID/OFDA is providing \$900,000 to FAO to support seed and tool distribution in northern CAR.

The U.N. World Food Program (WFP) is working to supplement available food stocks in northern CAR. However, humanitarian agencies are experiencing difficulties transporting food commodities into and within CAR. Insecurity and a limited humanitarian presence are hindering WFP's capacity to deliver food assistance to a targeted caseload of 150,000 people. Projected shortages in the distribution pipeline, primarily due to transportation complications, further undermine opportunities to address food insecurity in the region. USAID is coordinating with U.N. and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners to address deficiencies in food distribution.

Ongoing USAID/OFDA-funded food security and nutrition assessments conducted by Action Contre la Faim (ACF) in northwestern CAR aim to improve data to better identify needs and target assistance. To date in FY 2007, USAID/FFP is providing 4,566 metric tons (MT) of P.L. 480 Title II emergency food assistance, valued at nearly \$4.2 million, for WFP programs in northern CAR.

### ***Health and Nutrition***

The health care system in CAR collapsed due to inadequate government funding and capacity, prior to the current crisis. Health centers operate on a cost-recovery basis, rendering services inaccessible to the majority of the population who is unable to pay for consultations or medicines. Recent insecurity and subsequent staff departures have further weakened the system. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) and Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) provide the majority of health services in the north, combining free hospital-based care with mobile clinics.

Comprehensive malnutrition data is currently unavailable for CAR; however, humanitarian agencies operating in the north report a minimal number of severe acute malnutrition cases, significantly below emergency levels. The USAID/OFDA-sponsored food security and nutrition assessments will enable humanitarian partners to appropriately target relief activities. Results from the assessment are expected in early March.

### ***Coordination and Response Capacity***

According to the USAID assessment team, despite a steady increase in the number of humanitarian actors since September 2006, response and coordination capacity in CAR remain limited due to funding and staff constraints. As more NGOs arrive in country, coordination among agencies will be essential to ensure an appropriate humanitarian response and avoid duplication of efforts or gaps in coverage.

In the last six months, OCHA, UNICEF, and FAO have deployed emergency specialists to CAR, and the U.N. has established sectoral leads and monthly coordination meetings in Bangui. USAID continues to work closely with U.N. and NGO partners to build on recent initiatives and strengthen inter-agency coordination. In FY 2007, USAID/OFDA has provided \$250,000 to OCHA to enhance coordination capacity and response.

## USAID AND STATE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

FY 2007			
<i>Implementing Partner</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<b>USAID/OFDA ASSISTANCE<sup>1</sup></b>			
ACF	Food Security and Nutrition Assessments	Ouham, Ouham-Pendé	\$50,048
FAO	Food Security	Northern CAR	\$900,000
IPHD	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene	Ouham, Ouham-Pendé	\$70,834
OCHA	Coordination	Countrywide	\$250,000
UNICEF	Emergency Relief Supplies	Northern CAR	\$281,009
<b>TOTAL USAID/OFDA</b>			<b>\$1,551,891</b>
<b>USAID/FFP ASSISTANCE<sup>2</sup></b>			
WFP	4,566 MT of P.L. 480 Title II Emergency Food Assistance	Countrywide	\$4,196,500
<b>TOTAL USAID/FFP</b>			<b>\$4,196,500</b>
<b>TOTAL USAID HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO CAR IN FY 2007<sup>3</sup></b>			<b>\$5,748,391</b>

<sup>1</sup> USAID/OFDA funding represents anticipated or actual obligated amounts as of March 1, 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Estimated value of food assistance.

<sup>3</sup> In FY 2006, State/PRM provided \$350,000 to ICRC to support protection and IDP assistance activities in northern CAR.



Ky Luu  
Director  
Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance